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# School Counseling and Counseling Psychology Collaboration: A Cautionary Tale

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## Abstract

Counseling psychology and school counseling programs have been historically aligned since the inception of their respective professions. Given current trends, there appear to be differences in the foci and approach to training and professional engagement in the two disciplines. The current investigation surveyed programs in which counseling psychology and school counseling programs were housed within the same department or college to identify areas of collaboration. The survey and journal reviews revealed a divide in the areas of curriculum, service delivery, and professional organization engagement. There appeared to be better collaboration in research, although limited in scope. Although counseling psychology and school counseling continue to have shared values, current trends in curriculum needs, accreditation and professional foci suggest a limited scope of collaboration. Research may be an area in which the two professions can remain professionally engaged. We offer suggestions for increasing collaborative activities.

## Keywords

counseling psychology, school counseling, accreditation, master's education, collaboration

### Significance of the Scholarship to the Public

This investigation evaluated current trends in the training and professional engagement of two historically related counseling disciplines: school counseling and counseling psychology. Given current differences in curriculum needs, accreditation standards, and professional emphasis, the two disciplines appear to have grown apart and they are now unique and specialized professions. These differences have implications for training and future collaboration in the areas of school-related research, practice, and advocacy.

Counseling psychology and school counseling have their roots in the vocational guidance movement of the early 20th century. After the first quarter of that century both professions shifted to incorporate hygiene and mental health promotion. Initially, the two professions focused on these issues at different stages of the lifespan. School counseling emphasized academic and career development, along with hygiene and mental health promotion in pre-kindergarten through secondary education students, whereas counseling psychology focused on college students and adults. Given these common historical connections, the two professions have frequently been aligned academically and professionally ([Whiteley, 1984](#)).

Approximately 16 years ago, [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) called for greater partnership between counseling psychology (CP) and school counseling (SC), with a significant focus on academic program collaboration. This partnership was proposed to address the significant mental health needs of children and adolescents. Romano and Kachgal's call to action was related to the school reform movement, and was an attempt to help define a role for counseling psychologists ([Espelage & Poteat, 2012](#)). Romano and Kachgal identified four potential areas of collaboration (i.e., curriculum, research, service, and professional organizations) that could serve as a focus for counseling psychologists and potential areas of partnership with SC. Several authors were invited to react to Romano and Kachgal's proposal and their written responses were published with Romano and Kachgal's article. The responses by counseling psychologists and counselor educators were mixed, but predominately, they were skeptical about the prospect of increased collaboration between the two professions. Shortly thereafter [Moore \(2005\)](#) synthesized the contents of Romano and Kachgal's call for collaboration and the accompanying responses from other authors in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, a counselor educator journal. Moore concluded that five of the seven responses were pessimistic about the potential for increased collaboration, and both counselor educators and counseling psychologists shared this pessimistic perspective. Similarly, a review of the special issue, published in the *Family Journal* concluded, "This edition offers insights into the two disciplines, but the desire for collaboration does not seem to be equally represented for those in the school counseling field" ([Nieponski & Desmond, 2005](#), p. 515).

Given the tenor of the collective responses to [Romano and Kachgal's \(2004\)](#) proposal and the years since its publication, we wondered what, if anything, has occurred regarding the advancement of partnerships and collaboration between CP and SC. A search of key databases (i.e., Academic Search Premier, ERIC, PsycINFO, and PsycABSTRACT) using the terms "school counseling" and "counseling psychology" identified only four peer-reviewed publications with both those key terms from 2004 to present, after removing reviews already noted above (i.e., [Moore, 2005](#); [Nieponski & Desmond, 2005](#)). The following investigation sought to provide descriptive information about the extent of collaboration between CP and SC via (a) a review of programs that share academic resources, and (b) a review of publication content and authors in key CP and SC journals. To review the programs, we used the areas of potential collaboration that were proposed by [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#). Previous literature about the nature and extent of collaboration to date has not only been limited, but

also primarily theoretical. The purpose of the current study was to provide descriptive data that could serve as a baseline assessment of the current collaborative efforts between CP and SC.

## Areas of Collaboration

In their original publication, [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) noted areas of potential collaboration and addressed existing barriers to CP and SC partnerships. This conceptualization was based on the experiences and perceptions of the authors, and no specific evidence was offered to support the level or type of collaboration occurring at the time. We provide a review of these potential collaborative domains between CP and SC, and note recent changes in these fields that may influence the nature of, and capacity for collaboration between the two specialties.

### Curriculum

One area of potential collaboration between CP and SC programs involves overlapping graduate curriculum. It is important to note that SC programs involve master's level preparation while CP tends to focus on doctoral training, although there are a number of master's level CP programs. Specifically, seven curricular areas of graduate education were identified as common foci for both CP and SC programs: theoretical orientation, career development, multiculturalism, prevention, supervision, group work, and psychopathology. Although [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) noted the common content areas, they also recognized potentially significant curricular divergence within these areas for the two specialties. These differences arise as a result of approaches to practice and preprofessional training for each discipline, which might be reflected in the focus of class discussions and course assignments. Further, formative assessments might vary significantly for these two groups because of the varied emphases and distinct accreditation requirements of the two professions. For example, [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) suggested course assignments and evaluations for master's-level SC students might focus more on understanding and developing intervention-based programs, whereas doctoral courses could focus on evaluating or developing research to understand the effects of such interventions. These content and competencies are notably different for these specialty areas and are perhaps not appropriate for integration in the classroom.

### Research

Research opportunities were a second area of potential collaboration identified by [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#). They identified the emphasis on accountability and evaluation in the current educational climate and SC profession as a motivating factor for collaboration. SC training in research, statistics, and program evaluation do not have the depth of preparation as doctoral programs in CP. Many theorists in SC readily acknowledge the need to provide evidence that SC interventions attain the desired outcomes, and ultimately influence academic success among students ([Burkard et al., 2009](#); [Gysbers & Henderson, 2012](#); [Lapan, 2012](#)). Toward that end, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) established the School Counseling Analysis, Leadership and Evaluation (SCALE) Research Center, whose mission is to support the investigation of the efficacy of SC interventions and to establish a database of evidence-based practice ([Sabella, 2006](#)). Additionally, the ASCA offers several annual grants to support outcome research on SC interventions. These efforts highlight the need for research on SC interventions as undeniable and highly important. Counseling psychologists could work collaboratively with school counselors to further establish best practices for school-based interventions. However, school counselors are increasingly providing evidence that comprehensive SC programs are indeed relevant to students and schools and achieve outcomes that are important to them. This evidence is mounting independent of counseling psychologists' involvement with school counselors and research (e.g., [Carey & Dimmitt, 2012](#); [Lapan et al., 2006](#); [Whiston et al., 2010](#)).

## Professional Organizations

As a third area of potential collaboration, [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) recommended the Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP) form a partnership with professional organizations important to SC such as the ASCA, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, and although not originally included, presumably, the American Counseling Association. Key areas of emphasis for collaboration were to influence legislative and public policies relevant to children, adolescents, schools, and school counselors, as well as legislative advocacy for funding initiatives such as elementary and secondary school counseling grants. The professional organizations could collaborate on curriculum development to ensure stronger graduate preparation and internship experiences for school counselors. They also suggested interprofessional collaboration focus on mental health and behavioral concerns as well as career development across the life span and academic achievement, particularly in at-risk and underserved populations.

## Service

As a final area of proposed collaboration between CP and SC, [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) discussed opportunities for service, such as counseling psychologists providing guest lectures in classes to SC students. For instance, counseling psychologists could provide consultation on psychopathology and mental health concerns to school counselors. For counseling psychologists, each of these areas represent professional knowledge and skills many school counselors have not developed during their training. As such, counseling psychologists could serve as mental health consultants for school counselors and schools. Further, school counselors would also benefit from having access to the latest research on topics relevant and important to SC. As another area of service collaboration, Romano and Kachgal suggested CP could provide their expertise in supervision to SC programs and doctoral students could provide supervision for SC students for field experiences (e.g., practicum, internship).

## Divergence of Professions

Although opportunities for collaboration between CP and SC appear to have potential, there are several larger systemic issues present that may interfere with collaboration between the two specialty areas. Foremost, education in CP has traditionally focused on doctoral preparation, which is supported by American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation. As such, the preparation of school counselors and the education of master's-level practitioners is typically a secondary focus. [Jackson and Scheel \(2013\)](#) present an excellent discussion of these historical issues and the decisions by APA and professional psychology to align with doctoral rather than master's education. Over the past few years, there has been a resurgent interest in master's-level training among counseling psychologists and APA. For instance in 2019, APA's Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) called for nominations to a task force to "develop a blueprint for APA accreditation of master's programs in health service psychology" (p. 1). Further, this topic has received attention at several recent Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs' annual conferences.

This interest in master's-level training is motivated in part by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs' (CACREP) 2009 accreditation standards (and reaffirmed in the 2016 revision) that defined core counselor educator faculty as having doctoral degrees from counselor education programs, preferably those that are CACREP accredited ([CACREP, 2015](#)). This accreditation requirement limits the number of eligible CP faculty who could teach in CACREP accredited programs by only recognizing CP faculty who had taught in counselor education programs prior to July of 2013. As a general principle, CACREP does not recognize CP programs as a type of counselor education program. The decision to pursue or retain CACREP accreditation could potentially create significant financial challenges for some academic departments. In many instances, master's enrollments may offset the financial burden of a CP doctoral program, thus creating financial disparities between master's and doctoral programs ([Isacco et al., 2018](#)). With increasing divisions between CP (i.e., SCP

and Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs) and CACREP, some counseling psychologists have sought to address this issue by supporting a new accreditation mechanism to provide program standards for master's education in psychology and counseling through the Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC). Although accreditation of master's programs is beyond the scope of this article, it should be noted that these tensions between CP and the CACREP might create future barriers to CP and SC collaboration.

In addition to concerns with the CACREP, the Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology put forward by [APA \(2015\)](#) emphasizes preparation of counseling psychologists and other doctoral-level psychologists as health service providers in psychology. [Fouad et al.'s \(2009\)](#) review of competency benchmarks highlights the skills valued in health service psychology (e.g., counseling, clinical, and school psychology). These skills align with psychological intervention in therapeutic settings and as a primary focus of counseling psychologists. However, this focus does not align well with contemporary SC practice.

Concurrently, SC preprofessional programs have transitioned to teaching the ASCA National Model ([ASCA, 2019](#)) to define the SC profession. This model emphasizes student achievement and accountability via data-driven programming and decision-making. Several supporting documents further define SC, including: ASCA School Counselor Competencies ([ASCA, 2012](#)), ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success ([ASCA, 2014](#)), and ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors ([ASCA, 2016](#)). These documents reflect positions that are more aligned with school and educational leadership than with mental health professionals. Although school counselors provide direct service delivery for mental health, the scope of practice is limited, and the profession has moved toward the development and implementation of programming designed to support the academic achievement of students. A focus on the mental health needs of students is seen as only one aspect of the overall mission of a SC program of services ([ASCA, 2019](#)).

In summary, historical collaboration and common foci initially bound the CP and SC professions, however, the two professions have diverged over the last 50 years. In part, this differentiation has been driven by the emphasis on doctoral education in CP as compared to master's education in SC ([Jackson & Scheel, 2013](#)). We also see evidence of divergence in those fundamental aspects of the professions that define their respective identities. Each profession now has separate accreditation processes, practice guidelines, and ethical standards. It is noteworthy that the BEA task force does not include representation from SC in the list of disciplines and areas of expertise to be included when exploring accreditation of master's degree programs within [APA \(n.d.\)](#). Although [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) sought to increase collaboration between the professions, the divergences we describe reflect increasing separation of the two fields, perhaps making collaboration less accessible.

## Rationale for Current Investigation

Given the original proposal by [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) regarding the commonality and potential for collaboration between CP and SC, as well as the subsequent changes in the professions, we wondered if academic programs were indeed collaborating as proposed. As noted, some authors suggest the two specialties have significantly diverged in interests (e.g., [Lichtenberg & Goodyear, 2004](#); [Moore, 2005](#); [Pope, 2004](#)), such that collaboration is no longer realistic. Furthermore, to date, there has been no systematic investigation of the nature and type of collaboration between the two professions. It is not uncommon for CP and SC programs to be housed within the same academic department, college, or school. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to investigate if and how CP programs collaborate with their SC colleagues. We believed a survey using the dimensions proposed by [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) could serve as a framework for understanding the nature and types of collaborations between CP and SC. In addition to the survey, we also conducted an analysis of key CP and SC professional journals to augment our understanding of how the two professions might be

collaborating. As such, the primary goal of this study was to provide descriptive data reflecting current relationships between these two specialties. Additionally, the findings could offer insight into the extent that [Romano and Kachgal's \(2004\)](#) recommendations for collaboration have been realized, as well as provide guidance on how the two professions could aspire to work together in the future.

## Method

The intent of this research was to provide baseline data regarding the level of collaboration between CP and SC programs. We examined CP and SC programs located in the same school or college (e.g., educational programs, graduate professional studies), although not necessarily located in the same department. CP and SC programs located in the same university, but in a separate school or college were excluded from this study. We reasoned that collaboration was more likely to occur if the programs shared common college and faculty resources.

## Participating Programs

We focused on programs in the United States, excluding Canadian programs because of the separation between APA and the Canadian Psychological Association doctoral accreditation procedures. SC is also regulated differently in Canada than in the United States, making comparisons more difficult. Therefore, we focused on programs housed in the United States to avoid confusion.

We developed a list of eligible programs through two steps. First, a list of APA-accredited doctoral CP programs was identified from the American Psychologist (2016), which yielded a total of 77 active programs (inactive programs were excluded). After all CP programs were identified, we identified those universities that contained both CP and SC programs in the same college or school by reviewing each program's website. This procedure yielded a total of 44 programs in which both SC and CP programs were located in the same college or school at the university. We summarize these programs in [Table 1](#), and include information about whether the programs shared the same department, and note accreditation(s) where applicable.

**Table 1.** Program and Accreditation Summary

		Accreditation		
Institution	Department	CACREP	CAEP	MPCAC
Auburn University	Same	Yes	Yes	
Ball State University	Same	Yes	Yes	
Boston College	Same			
Carlow University	Same			
Cleveland State University	Different	Yes	Yes	
Fordham University	Same		Yes	Yes
Georgia State University	Same	Yes	Yes	
Howard University	Same		Yes	
Indiana U-Bloomington	Same	Yes		
Lehigh University	Same			Yes
Louisiana Tech U	Same	Yes	Yes	
Loyola University of Chicago	Same		Yes	
Marquette University	Same	Yes	Yes	
New York University	Same			Yes
Oklahoma State University	Same	Yes	Yes	
Our Lady of the Lake	Same			
Purdue University	Same	Yes	Yes	



Seton Hall University	Same		Yes	
Tennessee State University	Same		Yes	
Texas A&M University College Station	Same			
University of Akron	Same	Yes	Yes	
University of Buffalo, SUNY	Same			
University of Denver	Same			
University of Georgia	Same	Yes	Yes	
University of Houston	Same		Yes	
University of Iowa	Different	Yes		
University of Louisville	Same	Yes	Yes	
University of Maryland College Park	Same <sup>a</sup>			
University of Memphis	Same	Yes	Yes	
University of Minnesota (Ed)	Same			
University of Missouri-Columbia	Same			
University of Missouri-KC	Same		Yes	Yes
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Same			
University of North Dakota	Same			
University of Northern Colorado	Same	Yes	Yes	
University of Oklahoma	Same		Yes	
University of South Alabama	Different			
University of South Mississippi	Different		Yes	
University of Texas-Austin	Same			
University of Utah	Same			
University of WisconsinMilwaukee	Same			Yes
Utah State University <sup>b</sup>	Same			
West Virginia University	Same	Yes	Yes	
Western Michigan University	Same	Yes	Yes	

Note. CACREP = Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related-Educational Program; CAEP = Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation; MPCAC = Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council. a The University of Maryland's Counseling Psychology program is a joint program offered by two academic departments: Department of Psychology and Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education. The School Counseling program is solely located in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education. b The Utah State University programs are housed in the Graduate College, all other universities listed have programs housed in the College of Education.

## Survey

The survey consisted of 50 items and was designed to assess program integration and collaboration in the areas of curriculum, research, and professional organization affiliation. When developing the survey, we found it challenging to develop questions that uniquely assessed the service aspect of collaboration in the academic training setting. Therefore, we subsumed questions related to service under the other three areas of collaboration. Items were designed to elicit information about both the level and type of collaboration between the CP and SC programs in these areas. See the [Appendix](#) for sample questions within each area of collaboration. Additionally, we collected descriptive information on program faculty and student admissions for each program.

## Procedure

We contacted department chairs and program directors to identify the most knowledgeable program representatives to interview using the survey questions. We offered programs the option of responding to the



survey via telephone interviews or written response. All department chairs were emailed twice and contacted by phone three times before programs were determined to be unresponsive. We conducted phone interviews with representatives from 30% of programs ( $n = 13$ ) and 45% of programs indicated a preference to respond to the survey questions via email correspondence ( $n = 20$ ). In these cases, we prepopulated the survey with information gathered from the program website and asked the program representatives to review and correct information as necessary. We also interviewed or corresponded with a second program representative to gather additional information in 32% ( $n = 14$ ) of the programs where we directly communicated with program representatives.

The remaining 25% ( $n = 11$ ) of programs did not respond to either of these procedures. For these programs, the survey information reported here represents data gathered from their websites. In all cases, survey information appeared to be readily available from department and program websites and all survey items were completed. To provide a validity check, two researchers independently completed the survey using data available on the websites for those eleven programs who did not respond to confirm the accuracy of the information gathered on the prepopulated survey. The information gathered by the second researcher confirmed the accuracy of the information reported by the first researcher for the program. This procedure resulted in all 44 CP programs being represented in the findings.

## Journal Analysis

In addition to collecting survey data from programs, we examined publication trends in key CP and SC journals. An examination of publication trends is thought to be indicative of general interest in a topic and is a method that has been used in past research to establish interest trends among counseling psychologists ([Flores et al., 1999](#)). We reviewed the titles and abstracts of all articles published in *The Journal of Counseling Psychology* (JCP) and *The Counseling Psychologist* (TCP) from a ten-year period from 2007–2017 to identify the extent of the subject focus on school related topics or references to school-based research. Articles that contained any reference to schools in either the title or abstract were included in the tally. Specifically, if the articles included research conducted in schools, research using K-12 populations, and school specific theory or opinion. Two independent reviewers identified articles, with 100% agreement on article identification. Additionally, publications in *Professional School Counseling* (PSC), the flagship journal for SC, were reviewed to identify the number of articles written by counseling psychologists from 2012 to 2017. The principle investigators reviewed author information to identify those authors who were counseling psychologists and to understand the level of CP authorship in SC's flagship journal.

## Results

A total of 44 CP programs affiliated with SC master's programs were surveyed. Of these programs, 91% ( $n = 40$ ) were affiliated with a SC program at the departmental level and only 9% ( $n = 4$ ) were affiliated with a SC program at the college or school level. All but 25% ( $n = 11$ ) of programs were accredited at some level as noted in [Table 1](#). Programs were accredited as follows: 45% by CACREP, 9% by MPCAC, and 59% by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Some programs had multiple accreditations, hence the total number of reported accreditations exceeds 44 programs. Results showed that 18% ( $n = 8$ ) of programs intended to seek accreditation. Two programs intended to seek CACREP accreditation and six reported their intention to seek MPCAC accreditation. Most of the programs were campus-based programs (80%;  $n = 35$ ), with only 9% ( $n = 4$ ) of programs being provided in an online format, and 11% ( $n = 5$ ) being provided in a hybrid format.

Program enrollment varied with the mean number of CP students admitted annually being 7.13 ( $SD = 2.10$ ;  $Mdn = 7$ ;  $Mode = 7$ ;  $Range = 3-13$ ). The mean number of SC students admitted annually was 14.19 ( $SD = 7.98$ ;  $Mdn = 12$ ;  $Mode = 10$ ;  $Range = 2-40$ ). Programs offered a mean of 4.77 ( $SD = 2.88$ ;  $Mdn = 4.0$ ;  $Mode =$

4.0; Range = 0–15) courses specific to SC students. Tenure track faculty who were counseling psychologists predominantly taught the courses.

A subset of CP and SC programs ( $n = 4$ ) were located in the same college or school, but not the same department. No specific patterns emerged for this subset. The results presented next represent the accumulative results across the 44 programs.

## Curriculum Collaboration

We examined the intersection of students in CP and SC programs by investigating how often the students were enrolled in courses together, the nature of CP faculty collaboration with SC curriculum, and CP faculty experience in SC. Nearly half the total programs reported having CP and SC students enrolled in classes together (48%;  $n = 21$ ). Many of these courses focused on five content areas that would typically be considered core master's-level counseling professional preparation courses. Here, overlap in instruction was found with 32% of programs with counseling theories ( $n = 14$ ), 32% ( $n = 14$ ) with career development and counseling, 23% ( $n = 10$ ) with psychopathology, 41% ( $n = 18$ ) with multicultural counseling, and 39% ( $n = 17$ ) with group counseling. The other major category reflecting curricular collaboration included electives with 34% ( $n = 15$ ) of programs identifying courses such as addictions and family counseling, which again reflected master's-level counselor training.

The vast majority of SC programs used the ASCA National Model to guide their curriculum, with 72% ( $n = 32$ ) affirming integration of the model, 14% ( $n = 6$ ) indicating they did not teach the model, and 14% not responding. Programs generally taught the ASCA National Model in an entry-level SC course (73%;  $n = 32$ ). Programs appeared to teach this content in advanced SC courses less frequently (27%;  $n = 12$ ), practicum/internship courses (20%;  $n = 9$ ), or core counseling professional preparation courses (9%;  $n = 4$ ). Counseling psychology faculty taught SC courses (70%;  $n = 31$ ) in programs, although the majority of the CP faculty reported having no SC experience (39%;  $n = 17$ ). Many programs used adjunct faculty (41%;  $n = 18$ ) or clinical faculty (23%;  $n = 10$ ) with SC experience to teach SC courses, rather than adjunct (5%;  $n = 2$ ) or clinical faculty (9%;  $n = 4$ ) with no SC experience. The counseling psychologists who did practice as school counselors had a mean of 2.67 years of practice. However, it is important to note the median and modal years of practice as a school counselor was 0.00, which is an indication of how few counseling psychologists had practice experience in SC. Further, for many of those counseling psychologists, it had been several years since they practiced as school counselors ( $M_{\text{years}} = 11.5$ ;  $SD = 9.38$ ). Over half the programs required faculty who supervise SC practicum and internship experiences have professional SC experience (57%;  $n = 25$ ). Further, only a minority of CP faculty were supervising SC students during their practicum and internship (27%;  $n = 12$ ). Programs that did not use CP faculty tended to use tenure track, counselor educator faculty (36%;  $n = 16$ ), or adjunct faculty (32%;  $n = 14$ ) for supervision of their SC students. A few programs used nontenured clinical faculty (11%;  $n = 5$ ). CP doctoral students were used in 20% ( $n = 9$ ) of supervision for SC practicum and internship students, but only 7% ( $n = 3$ ) of these programs provided any SC specific training for these doctoral students. Finally, 48% ( $n = 21$ ) of programs had a SC coordinator with a background in SC, and 41% ( $n = 18$ ) of programs had CP faculty involved in the coordination of the SC program.

## Research Collaboration

Many programs reported having CP faculty who conducted research in collaboration with schools (75%;  $n = 33$ ). In these programs a mean of 1.70 faculty reported collaborating on school-related research projects ( $SD = 1.47$ ;  $Mdn$  and  $Mode = 1.00$ ;  $Range = 0-5$ ). Approximately half (52%;  $n = 23$ ) of the CP programs reported having at least one counseling psychologist who was involved in collaborative research or program evaluation projects with SC faculty or the SC program ( $M = 1.18$ ;  $SD = 1.65$ ). Similarly, 55% ( $n = 24$ ) of programs reported involving CP doctoral students in these school-related and/or collaborative research and program evaluation projects.

## Professional Organization Service

A limited number of CP faculty (25%;  $n = 11$ ) reported involvement with SC related professional organizations, and only 11% ( $n = 5$ ) of CP faculty reported having held leadership positions either regionally or nationally in SC.

## Journal Review

[Table 2](#) offers a summary of publishing trends for JCP, TCP, and PSC between 2007 and 2017. An examination of PsycINFO indicated that JCP published 616 manuscripts, 37 (6%) involved school-based samples or topics, and TCP published 496 manuscripts, with 15 (3%) that involved school-based samples or topics. During this time, counseling psychologists published four individual articles in PSC.

**Table 2.** Articles With School-Based Samples and Topics Published in JCP and TCP

Year	JCP-SR articles	JCP-total articles	TCP-SR articles	TCP-total articles
2007	5	45	0	37
2008	4	46	0	43
2009	3	53	4	46
2010	5	44	4	42
2011	2	52	1	53
2012	2	61	0	56
2013	2	60	0	50
2014	3	65	0	45
2015	4	68	0	43
2016	4	70	0	43
2017	3	52	6	38
Total	37	616	15	496

Note. JCP = Journal of Counseling Psychology; TCP = The Counseling Psychologist; SR = School Related.

## Discussion

There is no doubt that individual counseling psychologists are involved in important ways with SC programs in their departments or colleges and in some cases, with school counselors in schools. The two professions share common philosophical perspectives, particularly in the areas of multicultural competency, social justice, and prevention ([Burkard et al., 2009](#)). Although these shared values and foci exist, these commonalities do not appear to represent an intentional and systemic relationship between CP and SC currently. Furthermore, the evidence from this investigation suggests that the two professional specialties currently have a limited level of collaboration in the areas proposed by [Romano and Kachgal's \(2004\)](#) conceptual model, which focused on areas where CP could inform and support SC. However, our investigation suggests that a bidirectional approach is more appropriate in which the two unique and independent disciplines work in a truly collaborative manner in which both professions are on "equal footing". For example, our investigation suggests counseling psychologists have minimal involvement with SC programs and professional organizations. Furthermore, counseling psychologists' actual experience with contemporary SC practice appears quite limited. This finding suggests most CP faculty have a limited understanding of contemporary models and practices of SC, raising questions regarding the role counseling psychologists should play in school counselor preparation and training. Next, we offer a more detailed discussion of the findings and offer potential directions for future collaboration and professional relationships between the two specialty areas.

## Curriculum Collaboration

Over half of the total programs surveyed did not endorse significant collaboration in curriculum between SC and CP courses. When CP and SC students took courses together, the courses in which they were coenrolled were

those counseling courses any master's or doctoral students in counseling would typically complete as core master's-level requirements. For instance, the top four classes identified as those that CP and SC students took together included: multicultural counseling, group counseling, counseling theories, and career development/counseling. These courses are typically designed to help students gain foundational knowledge and skills in these content areas with the intent of preparing students for their field experiences at the master's-level (e.g., practicum, internship). As such, these classes appear to reflect efficiency in curriculum planning, rather than interdisciplinary training as encouraged by [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#). If there were deeper collaboration between the disciplines, we might expect to see other interdisciplinary courses emerge in areas important to both CP and SC programs—such as counseling with children and adolescents, research in education, educational based coursework, or fieldwork classes. It is also possible that there is a curricular gap in that CP students may be focused on the development of research competencies rather than applied practices ([Lichtenberg & Goodyear, 2004](#)). Finally, it is important to acknowledge the possibility that “efficiency” in curriculum planning may not result in effective preparation of CP or SC students. By cross-listing the courses, the instructors may be teaching to the common denominator and neglecting what is unique and important to each professional specialty.

Beyond efficiency in core curriculum delivery, departments do appear to recognize the importance of addressing the school environment as a context for practice when teaching contemporary SC practices in their SC programs, particularly given that many programs use the ASCA National Model ([ASCA, 2019](#)). For instance, SC practice reflects a response-to-intervention (RTI) practice that is common to schools and recognizes the importance of three tiers of service. Although the three RTI tiers are akin to the three levels of prevention (i.e., universal, selected, and indicated) utilized by CP in the behavioral health sector ([Robinson et al., 2004](#)), the specific language and applications of the levels are setting specific and unique. The contents specific to SC practices were taught in courses in which only SC students were routinely enrolled (e.g., foundational or advanced SC, practicum or internship). This separation in curriculum further limits the opportunities for CP students to learn about current SC practices. Although there were reportedly a significant number of CP faculty teaching core SC courses, it is somewhat concerning that the majority of these CP faculty had very limited to no experience in SC. This lack of experience with contemporary SC practices likely limits the capacity for collaboration, and may even bring into question faculty competence to offer these courses for SC students. It was uncommon for CP faculty to teach or supervise SC students for practicum and internship experiences or serve in the administration of SC programs. Although this finding may be in recognition of the limits of CP faculty's ability to deliver the SC curriculum; it is also possible that CP faculty are more involved in doctoral level education or other aspects of training.

Overall, our survey suggests there is limited intentional curricular collaboration occurring between the specialties of CP and SC. Such a finding may reflect the increasing specialization of the two professional groups. Specifically, there appears to be an increasing gap in professional identities, standards, constituent groups, and approaches to interventions. The ASCA has an identified intervention model for service delivery (ASCA National Model; [ASCA, 2019](#)), a set of professional competencies (ASCA School Counselor Competencies; [ASCA, 2012](#)), standards for student development to guide SC program development (ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success; [ASCA, 2014](#)), and ethical standards specific to SC professionals (ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors; [ASCA, 2016](#)). Similarly, the SCP has parallel professional standards that are quite unique and reflect the professional practice of health service psychology. As such, SC knowledge and skills are highly specialized to the needs of schools and do not align well with the health service psychology approach embedded in the accreditation standards of the Commission on Accreditation ([APA, 2015](#); [Fouad et al., 2009](#)). These trends and our survey results suggest these two professional areas are diverging in curricular areas.

## Research

A significant number of CP programs indicated faculty were conducting research with school samples, with a little over half the programs indicating CP faculty were specifically collaborating with school counselors. Similarly, slightly over half the programs reported having doctoral students involved in some type of school-based research. These results suggest there remains a significant interest in and opportunity for research collaboration between CP and SC. Although this self-reported interest and engagement in research collaboration was an encouraging finding, the actual publishing trends in key SC and CP journals were less promising. Our examination of JCP and TCP publication trends indicated a limited focus on school or SC concerns or topics, which is consistent with prior trends reported by [Walsh & Galassi \(2002\)](#) on the same journals. In fact, their review showed significant declines in both journals in K–12 school-related research for 1999–2000. As such, research that supports SC is quite limited among counseling psychologists.

Relatedly, we found that only four counseling psychologists published in PSC in the last five years (i.e., 2012–2017), which may be an indication that PSC is not seen as a viable publication outlet for CP. Two articles investigating these trends in the SC literature can inform our understanding of this finding ([Alexander et al., 2003](#); [Zagelbaum et al., 2014](#)). Alexander et al.'s review from 1995–2002, reflected a time of transition in which two SC journals merged into the current PSC journal. Throughout the merger process there was an emphasis on mental health over academic achievement concerns of students at a ratio of about 2:1. At this time, SC and CP were fairly well aligned, with an emphasis on mental health needs of students. However, the [Zagelbaum et al. \(2014\)](#) review spanned 2003–2010, after the [ASCA National Model \(2019\)](#) was introduced to the SC profession. This analysis revealed no change in the focus on academic achievement, and a decreased emphasis on the mental health needs of students. Additionally, they found an increased emphasis on articles that addressed other areas such as training for school counselors, school policy concerns, and school procedural issues. These changes in the foci of the journal seemed to support and align with the professional areas emphasized in the ASCA National Model ([ASCA, 2019](#)). The increased focus in PSC on school policy, procedure, and academic achievement, coupled with a decreased emphasis on student mental health concerns, may result in the journal no longer being seen as a viable publication outlet for counseling psychologists. This shift in PSC publication trends also provides further evidence of diverging professional emphases.

Our survey results and publication trends analysis do not support a current climate of collaboration. Further, there may be other barriers to research collaboration. Historically, there has been a perception amongst some in CP that doctoral-level training placed counseling psychologists in a position of expertise when compared to school counselors in the areas of research design, methodology, and program evaluation. It was also asserted that school counselors were more interested in qualitative methods than quantitative methodologies ([Romano & Kachgal, 2004](#)). Although this perception may have been justified at one time, it is no longer true that contemporary school counselors are unprepared to conduct quantitative research and program evaluation. At the time of [Romano and Kachgal's \(2004\)](#) Major Contribution in TCP, the ASCA National Model ([ASCA, 2002](#)) was newly published and in the first edition. Two of the four foundational pillars of this model, management and accountability, emphasized the need for data-driven evaluation of the effectiveness of SC interventions and programming ([ASCA, 2002](#)). Additionally, ASCA established the Recognized ASCA Model Program Award in 2003, both to encourage schools to implement the ASCA National Model and to distinguish those programs that evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of their interventions and programs using both quantitative and qualitative assessments ([ASCA, n.d.](#)). In particular, school counselors in the Recognized ASCA Model Program schools must demonstrate their capacity to analyze school and counseling program data to show how students' academic, career, and personal/social skills have changed because of their SC programs. Further, SC preparation at the master's-level has made accountability, research, and program evaluation a point of emphasis in graduate education ([ASCA, 2012](#); [CACREP, 2015](#)), such that master's degree students are leaving SC graduate programs

ready to conduct needs assessments and comprehensive program evaluation. Finally, the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research was founded in 2003. This clearinghouse to disseminate research was established as a repository for information and data related to evidence-based SC practice. The clearinghouse continues to disseminate research briefs to school counselors as well as support original research projects designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of SC interventions. Taken as a whole, these shifts have significantly increased SC's competency and professional emphasis on research and evidence-based practice in the past fifteen years.

It is also important to note that SC district administrators are collaborating with other educational administrators and professionals in terms of data driven accountability with regard to student success. Many district supervisors of SC programs have doctoral-level training in counselor education, and as such they have received advanced training in research methods and statistics ([CACREP, 2015](#)). Additionally, school counselors are encouraged to collaborate with other educational professionals in the development of their SC programs ([ASCA, 2019](#)). Within schools, there are many other professionals (e.g., educational psychologists, assessment coordinators, school psychologists) with doctoral-level training in advanced research methods and statistics who are available to school counselors for research consultation and collaboration. School counselors are often collaborating with these school-based professionals when and if they need assistance with research methods or data analysis. Although this reflects a trend of collaboration away from counseling psychologists and toward other school-based psychologists and administrators, the potential still exists for counseling psychologists and school counselors to collaborate on research in areas such as prevention, advocacy, and social justice.

## Professional Organizations

Only a small number of CP programs indicated faculty were involved in SC professional organizations, with only five CP faculty serving as regional or national leaders in SC. It is unclear whether these findings reflect individual faculty interest or the lack of effective working relationships between the primary professional organizations in CP and SC. Increasingly, the CP and SC professional organizations pursue separate and at times competing, goals regarding training, accreditation, and professional identity. For example, [Isacco et al. \(2018\)](#) conducted a panel discussion on master's-level training during the 2018 Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs conference. This discussion addressed various aspects of master's-level training in CP programs. The presentation emphasized the preparation of Licensed Professional Counselors but did not include information related to the training of school counselors. This panel's focus on educational preparation of Licensed Professional Counselors is consistent with the recent APA's BEA call to examine master's-level preparation and accreditation, which similarly lacked SC representation.

Furthermore, the CACREP's restrictions on counseling psychologist's ability to serve as core faculty in accredited SC programs limits younger CP faculty involvement in SC education and supervision. The rationale for this limit is in large part due to the CACREP perspective that the professional identities of counselor educators and counseling psychologists are quite disparate. As the primary accrediting body for professional counselor education, the CACREP believes students in accredited counseling programs should be working under the guidance and supervision of counselor educator professionals. More specifically and regarding SC, ASCA announced in 2019 the ASCA School Counselor Preparation Program Standards that will establish ASCA as a Specialized Professional Association under the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. A related development, ASCA and the American Counseling Association also have mutually agreed to separate as professional organizations. These developments further define SC as a professional specialty area that is quite distinct from CP as well as other master's-level community or clinical mental health counselors. These "battle lines" between the counseling professions are unfortunate because ultimately, all professional disciplines are committed to working on behalf of the same vulnerable populations. Ideally, our professional organizations should be collaborating to advocate for mental health parity and improved access to resources for underserved populations.



## Service

One service area that [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) recommended that has not yet been addressed is supervision. Specifically, they suggested CP faculty might provide in-service training for school counselors on supervision, and CP doctoral students might also provide supervision for master's-level SC students in practicum or internship settings. This collaborative vision represents an opportunity for counseling psychologists to provide expertise in supervision as well as training in evidence-based mental health interventions through their supervision of preprofessional school counselors. It also affords a potential supervision training opportunity for CP doctoral students. However, our survey results suggested less than a quarter of programs were using CP doctoral students in this manner; and over 50% of programs required supervisors to have experience in the specialty area of SC to provide supervision of SC students. As such, many CP students and faculty do not have the school-based expertise to offer the supervision support for SC students during their training and practice experiences. It seems reasonable to conclude that programs do not use CP students in this capacity because the CP students (and sometimes even CP faculty) typically do not have the background and training in the organizational, legal, and political context of schools/educational systems needed to offer competent supervision to SC students. Relatedly, state licensing standards require that experienced SC professionals supervise SC students during their practicum and internship experiences. Many counseling psychologists could not meet this qualification requirement unless they were also credentialed as a school counselor. However, over half of the programs utilized adjunct or clinical faculty to supervise their SC student's practicum and internship experiences. Therefore, CP faculty and doctoral students may not be able to directly offer supervision to preprofessional SC students due to these background training and credentialing barriers, CP faculty may be able to provide training and support for these adjunct and clinical faculty to support best practices in supervision for the SC students.

## Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this investigation. Foremost, we relied on [Romano and Kachgal's \(2004\)](#) model of CP and SC collaboration that may have limited the full appreciation of the areas of collaboration between CP and SC. In those cases when programs did not respond to the request for participation, information was gathered from websites that may not have been complete or accurate. Given the nature of the survey, the research team felt this approach was reasonable. If the information was not clearly and easily identified from the program's website, the researchers noted the information as missing. Relatedly, we often gathered survey information from one program representative, typically the program director or department chair. It is possible this representative was not fully aware or did not verify information with other faculty, although it is important to note that 32% of initial program representatives referred us to another faculty member to answer questions or clarify answers when they felt they did not have the capacity to provide the answer. It should also be noted that our sample only included data from CP doctoral programs and did not include standalone master's degrees in CP. MPCAC suggests there were 15 such programs. It is possible there is a difference between these programs in terms of collaboration. However, the purpose of this study was to assess collaboration between CP and SC programs within the same department or college.

We also want to acknowledge the changing nature of the relationship between CP and SC programs. During this investigation, multiple CP programs noted intent to move the SC program to an online learning format, and other programs were separating further through the relocation of programs to different departments or colleges. As such, the association of CP and SC programs within departments and colleges are rapidly changing, making our results restricted to this moment in time. We must also note that as authors we conducted this research as counseling psychologists who also are committed to the SC profession and the training of school counselors. As such, our personal perspectives and possible biases about the current relationships may have influenced our understanding of the survey results. That said, our significant involvement in both professions also provides us with a unique perspective when compared to our CP colleagues who have limited involvement



with SC. Finally, we focused this investigation on the collaboration between CP and SC within academic units. As such, our findings only reflect the nature of collaboration within this subset of CP and SC.

## Implications for Practice, Advocacy, Education/Training, and Research

The results of this investigation suggest that at present most CP faculty have limited involvement and experience with SC preparation programs and SC as a professional specialty. Differences in master's and doctoral preparation do not seem to fully account for this limited relationship. Specifically, it appears that counseling psychologists have limited involvement in SC-based training activities as well as engagement with school-based research and SC professional organizations. ASCA's recent departure from American Counseling Association, their new partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation for accreditation of SC programs, and lack of SC involvement on the BEA task force further supports SC's independence from CP. Given the current findings and these recent events, we offer a new vision for how these two professions can move forward and build mutually beneficial partnerships with one another.

Foremost, we encourage CP (and SCP specifically) to consider establishing a more formal relationship with the ASCA. Both professions continue to share common values and interests in the areas of cultural competence, evidence-based interventions, and career planning. Both professions are invested in developing, implementing, and evaluating prevention and intervention strategies designed to promote physical and mental health in children, adolescents, and their families. Both professions are invested in community and systems engagement to accomplish these goals. The ASCA's position could be enhanced through partnerships with the APA's and the SCP's well-established legislative and advocacy initiatives and organizational infrastructure when pursuing funding and legislation for programs and efforts that benefit schools and students.

This partnership also could provide counseling psychologists with opportunities to learn more about contemporary school practices by providing access to webinars, conferences, and other professional development opportunities. Counseling psychologist's participation in these continuing education opportunities could enhance instruction in those courses that include students from both programs. Whereas [Romano and Kachgal \(2004\)](#) focused on collaboration in terms of shared curriculum, we encourage programs to generally review their approach to training school counselors in master's programs alongside doctoral students and master's students from other areas (e.g., mental health counseling and rehabilitation counseling). Although there is resurgence of interest in master's-level preparation, programs that are comprised predominately of CP faculty should consider how to differentiate their curriculum to best meet the needs of the students with varied professional foci. MPCAC and even CACREP accreditation standards, align with the ideal of mental health counselors located in schools, however, contemporary SC practice addresses a broader scope of needs (e.g., academic, career, social-emotional). Contemporary school counselors must know how to design comprehensive, data-driven programs to address broader needs in their students. Here again, a partnership with ASCA would help CP faculty and SCP align their training programs with the ASCA National Model in order to ensure their graduates are prepared to deliver a SC program grounded in the model. Further, there continues to be a subset of doctoral students (and CP faculty) who remain interested and engaged in school-based interventions and initiatives. These students and faculty will be more effective in their collaborative work with schools if they remain versed in contemporary school issues and practices.

From a practice perspective, a partnership between these professional organizations would widen access to resources and materials developed for students, parents, and professionals. Establishing professional ties between ASCA and SCP could provide opportunities for counseling psychologists to directly engage and collaborate with other professionals who are committed to improving the lives of students and families. Collaboration in this area could be guided by the integrated care models developed to improve behavioral and mental health outcomes. [Doherty et al. \(1996\)](#) initially proposed levels of primary care behavioral healthcare

collaboration that could guide collaboration between SC and CP. The current model allows for care delivered by a variety of professionals with levels of collaboration or integration ranging from coordinated, colocated, to integrated care ([Heath et al., 2013](#)). Coordinated care primarily involves communication between professionals. Colocated care includes physical proximity in service delivery along with communication. Integrated care incorporates active efforts at collaboration whereby the professionals seek systemic solutions together. They have regular discussions about how to best meet the needs of their constituents and have an in-depth understanding of one another's roles and professional cultures. Since academic and career development problems often co-occur with mental and physical health challenges, schools are a logical setting for integrated care and collaboration. To date, limited models for collaborative care exist in schools ([Lyon et al., 2016](#)). Although mental health professionals are providing services to students and schools, they are rarely integrated with broader school programming. At best, they are providing coordinated or colocated care. SC and CP partnerships could lead the way in developing best practices for integrative and collaborative care in schools.

A formal professional partnership could also lead to greater opportunities for research collaboration. For example, ASCA has granted opportunities for SC-based research and coordinates the SCALE Research Center, which is intended to facilitate research important to SC. SCALE was designed to help connect researchers with one another as well as to funding and project opportunities. Additionally, SCALE supports the development of research protocols and instruments, multisite investigations, and partnerships between practicing school counselors and academics. It serves as a mechanism for dissemination of school-related research and evaluation findings to policy makers. An ASCA–SCP partnership could formalize and facilitate connections between researchers within the two organizations.

SC and CP have a shared interest in several topics including: social-emotional learning, school safety and interpersonal violence, cultural competence, first generation student needs, college readiness and educational-vocational planning, social justice concerns, training and development of counselors, outcome research, and evidence-based intervention practices ([Burkard et al., 2009](#)). The ASCA National Model ([ASCA, 2019](#)) also supports theory development, prevention, intervention, systemic change, advocacy, and use of data-driven practices for the benefit of students. These common topics and areas of focus could serve as the basis for research collaboration. Some counseling psychologists are involved already in research that directly supports school counselors' practice. For example, [Lapan \(2012\)](#) has long conducted research on the effectiveness of SC interventions, as well as academic and career planning intervention (e.g., [Lapan et al., 2017](#)). Similarly, [Burkard et al. \(2012\)](#) and [Carey and Dimmit \(2012\)](#) have assessed the effectiveness of SC interventions. Others have focused on school safety and bullying interventions (e.g., [Espelage & Horne, 2008](#)). Each of these researchers offer examples of how counseling psychologists can collaborate successfully with school counselors on research projects which can inform best practices to meet the needs of students and schools.

This topic is complex, political, and warrants further investigation. As noted previously, there were limitations with the current investigation that could be explored in future research. Specifically, there are standalone master's CP programs and the faculty in those programs may have a different relationship and perspective on collaboration with SC. It is possible CP faculty in those programs are more directly involved in collaborative efforts than those faculty from CP doctoral programs. Future research should investigate the nature of collaboration between those master's only programs. Also, the current study did not evaluate whether SC faculty published in CP professional journals. Similarly, this investigation did not explore SC faculty perceptions of CP nor their thoughts on collaboration. These questions should be addressed in future research to assess the viability of the partnerships and models of collaboration proposed herein.

In closing, we believe there is great potential in collaboration between SC and CP that is consistent with the values of both professions. That said, counseling psychologists and SCP will likely need to initiate this process and reach out to SC and ASCA. Counselor educators 15 years ago did not seem overly positive about the

prospects of increased collaboration. Little seems to have changed in the intervening years. However, SC is moving away from the broader counselor educator professional organizations and accrediting bodies of the American Counseling Association and CACREP. Therefore, the time seems ripe for actively exploring and engaging in partnerships as school counselors look to other like-minded professionals who can serve as allies in meeting the needs of students and schools. As noted by [Jackson and Scheel \(2013\)](#), master's-level training has languished as an area of focus for counseling psychologists, although the BEA task force suggests a renewed interest. During this time of transition and change, we have an opportunity to engage in intentional relationship building so that CP and SC can emerge as two allied professional specialties.

## Appendix

### Example Survey Questions

#### *Curriculum.*

Based on the core curriculum areas (excluding electives) for both counseling psychology (CP) and school counseling (SC); do students from the two programs take any classes together?

If yes, which of the following classes are taken together?

Counseling Theory  
Career Development/Counseling  
Psychopathology  
Multicultural Counseling  
Prevention  
Supervision  
Group Work/Counseling  
Other classes, please list:

Does your SC program teach the American School Counselor Association National Model of School Counseling?

If yes, where in the SC program or in what class(es) is the ASCA National Model of School Counseling taught?

#### *Research.*

Do any members of the CP faculty collaborate on research in schools?

If yes, how many faculty members collaborate on research in schools?

Do any members of the CP faculty collaborate with school counselors or school counseling programs on research or program evaluation?

If yes, how many faculty members collaborate with school counselors or school counseling programs on research or program evaluation?

#### *Professional Organizations.*

Are any members of your CP faculty professionally involved with school/educational professional organizations (e.g., American Educational Research Association, National Educational Association) at the national, state or local level?

If yes, have they held leadership positions?

Are any of your CP faculty professionally involved with the American School Counselor Association or with school counseling professional organizations at the state or regional level?

If yes, have they held leadership positions?

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